RESTORATION REVIEW

ABEL WAS CAIN'S BROTHER

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An aged business man here in Denton was telling me recently of the difficulties he has had through the years with his brothers. He loaned money to one brother who not only refused to pay the debt, but would pass him on the street without even speaking. He recalls from horse and buggy days how this brother would pass him on the road in his wagon without even offering him a ride. He did not seem to be especially bitter as he recalled those brotherly relationships, but was rather philosophical. He seemed to be saying that it is just that way with brothers. "They won't pay a brother what they owe," he said matter-of-factly, "they think you owe it to them for some reason."

There are many instances of people who have the same parents who seldom, if ever, see each other, and there is no indication that they have any desire at all to be with one another. Many brothers hate each other, nourishing resentments that have festered through the years, causing untold agony to parents and in-laws alike. Many a family reunion is a veritable powder keg that is likely to explode into unmitigated fury, if indeed the brothers who are at cross purposes have managed to be together at all "to please the folks." Only the brevity of such occasions makes them possible.

Coming from a family of seven sons and one daughter I should be something of an authority on such matters, but I must say that my own relationship with my brothers and sister have been far above average. There have been some difficulties along the way, to be sure, and as we grow older it seems that we see each other less, but for the most part the relationships have been gratifying. As for the two boys in my own family, made brothers by adoption, I can only say that I keep hoping they will grow to love each other as brothers should. As of now there is no lost affection between them, and there are occasions when I fear the crime of Cain will be repeated in my own family. And yet there are times when they are right down decent to each other. But I grow a bit uneasy when one or the other, like Cain, invites his brother to play with him in open country!

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What is there about our family life that causes such a lack of fraternity between siblings? Perhaps it is the close proximity that sets the stage for all that goes wrong. Friends had best see each other only occasionally and then only under favorable circumstances. I've always heard that "No house is big enough for two families," and it must have been something like this that the wise man had in mind when he advised "Be sparing in your visits to your neighbor's house, if he sees too much of you, he will dislike you" (Pro. 25: 17).

So maybe brothers have a hard time of it because they see too much of each other, and they consequently learn too much about each other. Familiarity may not always breed contempt, but often it does, especially when folk have to compete for both, the necessities and the luxuries of life. It is easy for any of us to be petty in our selfishness and jealousy, sinners that we are, especially in those family situations where we are likely to be ourselves. God pity those who have to live with us all time!

Yet there is something in us all that insists that *brothers shouldn't behave like that! We assume that* there is a fraternal law that not only forbids "the way of Cain," but that demands that brothers show special deference toward each other. The famous picture coming out of Boy's Town, depicting a boy carrying another boy and the caption reading "He ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother," tugs at the heart of us all. We conclude that if such a spirit cannot prevail between all men, certainly it should between brothers. That men should not quarrel because they are brothers is persuasive logic that goes all the way back to Abraham, who said to Lot: "Let there be no quarreling between us, for we are brothers."

The fact remains, however, that the first man in history ever to have a brother killed that brother. It was surely a joyous day for Eve when God blessed her with a son. The first mother ever could thankfully say, "With the help of the Lord I have brought a man into being." But it was that very baby, her own son, who was to teach her what murder is, and his victim was also to be the fruit of her womb. Pity poor Eve, she bears two sons that grow up to become the first murderer and murderer's victim. For one's son to become a killer is tragic enough, but for one's son to destroy his own brother is an unbearable double tragedy.

We might understand homicide better (not to speak of *fratricide*) if we knew what motivated this first of all murders, and along with it we might better understand our inability to behave as brothers in trying circumstances. Jude 11 speaks of those who had "gone the way of Cain" in such a way as to suggest that Cain's basic sin was irreverence. He is placed in the class with men who defile the body, flout authority, and insult celestial beings. This is a gross lack of respect for things that are holy. Cain had no regard for his brother because he had no respect for himself or for God. He rebelled against authority, being self-willed.

1 John 3: 11-12 places Cain, who is called "a child of the evil one," over against those who love one another. This makes "the way of Cain" the way of hate. He murdered because he hated. Why he hated his brother we cannot know for sure, and he himself probably did not know, but there are some indicators in the narrative.

Cain had a serious problem, and that problem was Cain more than it was Abel. He allowed selfish pride to destroy him, even though God warned him of such possible destruction. Once it was clear to Cain that his brother's sacrifices were more pleasing to

God than his own, his heart was set on evil toward his brother. When God saw Cain's anger he cautioned him: "If you do well, you are accepted; if not, sin is a demon crouching at the door. It shall be eager for you, and you will be mastered by it." Is it not remarkable that Satan could gain such control of the first man born into this world as to cause him to slay his own brother? We are foolish if we suppose Satan is any less concerned in destroying the fraternal bonds in our own lives. Not only are we not immune to the weaknesses that plagued Cain, but we may be equally as vulnerable as he to the sins that destroy brotherhood.

Despite God's warning Cain proceeded "with malice aforethought," to use legal terminology, to murder Abel. It was deliberative and calculating, designed to take advantage of his brother's trust and good nature. "Let us go into the open country," he says hypocritically. It was an invitation for sport and frolic, or simply for the sake of togetherness, as is the case with loving brothers. But murder was in Cain's heart. His weapon of whatever nature was made ready well in advance, perhaps hidden along the way. Like the brute beasts that Jude speaks of when he thinks of Cain, he set a trap for his own brother and murdered him brutally as one animal would another.

There is something of "the way of Cain" in us today when we seek to lure a brother into an embarrassing position or seek to expose him by placing the worst interpretation on what he does. "Come, brother, let's go out into the field together" does not have to end in actual murder in order to be as sinful as Cain. Some choose to use the column of a paper, others a tape recorder, while others seek incriminating evidence in private correspondence. Some will use stooges to gather the desired information. Many a missionary has been cut off from support back home, left to starve in the field so far as they cared, because a modern Cain quietly invited him for a stroll in the field.

There are different ways to commit fratricide. Some, like Cain, do it with a sword or a club, which may be less painful. The more cruel do it with a stare or sweet-spirited rejection in the name of orthodoxy. They are willing to deny a brother the precious fruits of fellowship, without which life becomes a burden, by insisting that others, in order to be loyal, must no longer have any association with him nor encourage or support him in any way. Even the shepherds of a flock will sometime isolate a sheep with such brutal rejection as to make Cain's dastardly deed look like a schoolboy's prank.

Cain's problem may have been that he, being the proud guy that he was, could not stand the unassuming goodness of Abel. John gives a rather simple answer as to why Cain killed Abel: "Because his own actions were wrong, and his brother's were right." Many a man has been killed for no greater crime than being right - *right* in motive and intent and heart, that is. John probably does not mean that Abel was *legally* right in that he had the right sacrifice, at the right place, and at the right time. But rather that his heart was right in offering the sacrifice.

Heb. 11:4 supports this: “By faith Abel offered a sacrifice greater than Cain’s, and through faith his goodness was attested, for his offerings had God’s approval; and through faith he continued to speak after his death.” Abel was *good,* that was his problem. He had no business being good. It got him murdered by his brother who could not stand goodness.

It is a sad commentary on the church of today that the more one becomes like Jesus the more perilous his standing in his congregation. Sectarianism cannot stand one who is not sectarian. Those who are petty and doctrinaire cannot bear the simple goodness of an Abel. He must be kindly invited into the open field and somehow destroyed — in the name of truth of course.

Poor Cain, one cannot but pity him as he became a vagabond upon the earth. He feared for his life, but God had no intention of anyone killing him, for he was doomed to live with himself his remaining days, an appropriate punishment for one so full of himself. God placed some kind of a mark on him so that no one would bother him.

Cain was a religious man, we are to remember, for he learned to sacrifice to God at the family altar. But he became so proud that his sacrifices, whether the fruit of the land that he tilled or animals of the field, were will worship rather than in reverence to God. This pride led him to anger toward his brother who was not proud, and the anger led to murder.

Poor man, shut up in a world all to himself, with no one like Abel around. No goodness. No trust. He lived on with murder on his hands and in his heart. “My punishment is greater than I can bear, “was his woeful cry. But it is hardly the cry of penitence. He was only sorry for himself. Still he had no feeling for his brother.

What tragedy it is when a man is willing to sacrifice the loveliness of fraternity for selfish pride. He might act like a brother should toward another if it were not for his standing with those “who are reputed to be somewhat.” He must think of his job and the meetings that might be canceled. He might not get to speak at the lectureships. Circumstances are such that if a man chooses to be a brother to all God’s children, and to treat them as such, he will find himself out in the field, surrounded by the powers that be.

It is all part of the tragic drama of being a sweet and loving brother to all God’s faithful. To be accepted by some one is compelled to hate others. To fraternize with all who love Jesus is to be rejected by others who love the party. Ah, but how beautiful brotherhood becomes to those who ignore party lines and accept all those who accept Jesus as Lord of their lives.

It is inevitable that such ones will be beckoned into the open field to be destroyed. One has no choice but to go and pay the price of being a free man. But believe me, he will, like good old Abel, continue to speak through such faith. — *the Editor*

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PRAYING FOR UNITY

Bob Williams and I have been trying as time will permit to pray for unity among brethren. If nothing else, it is having a therapeutic effect on us. We deem ourselves much closer to our brothers than before we began the effort. — George E. Cooper, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas

One question I am asked more and more these days is what one may do for the cause of unity among believers. The question usually comes from a person of the rank and file, one hardly in a position to wield influence upon policy or attitudes in our institutional structures. What can a housewife do about all these divisions that afflict us? Or a schoolteacher? Or a farmer or a business man?

I am telling the story over the country of what I saw in Westminster Abbey when I visited that shrine of English divines several years ago. Hanging in the foyer was a small sign reading "Prayers for Christian Unity in this Chapel Every Tuesday at 2 p.m." That impressed me more than all the works of art or even the tombs of England's greats that I saw there. Weekly gatherings in which concerned people pray for the unity of the church! I had not heard of any such thing before, and of course I had never seen any such sign or heard any such announcement among our own folk all my born days. I realize that those folk were only Episcopalians, and that God doesn't listen to Episcopalians even if they do pray for unity, but I was impressed nevertheless.

Now comes the above note from a professor at a Texas university, a brother with whom I went fishing while in mini-meetings in East Texas, telling me about praying with a brother for the unity of God's people and what it is meaning to them both. Surely this is part of the answer, and maybe a large part, of what we can all do about the mess we are in. Suppose thousands of us, even tens of thousands of us, prayed fervently for unity, as did our Lord, on a regular basis, the effect could well exceed our fondest dreams.

It is more than a matter of mere passing interest that our Lord prayed to God for the oneness of those who believed on him. This he did more in prospect, long before the wounds of factionalism afflicted the body of Christ, for his disciples, despite some problems among themselves, were a cohesive group. How much more urgent would the prayers of the Christ be amidst all the divisions that afflict us in 1972?

A line in our Lord's prayer for unity that we might overlook is the one that reads: *I give them my glory that they might be one.* Our divisions may be because we are *Ichabod*, without glory. Glory and unity go together. No love, no brotherhood. No glory, no unity. I take it that in giving us his glory that we may be one, Jesus is giving us his own presence through the Holy Spirit. He is both with us and in us through the indwelling Guest of heaven. This is our glory and this is the resource of unity. It is, after all, the Spirit's unity

that we are to preserve. We may be overlooking the most important means of all in preserving it: *praying together.*

We must believe that it would make all the difference in the world in our divided brotherhood if hundreds or thousands of our congregations began to have regular prayer meetings in behalf of the oneness of God's people. Let there be a set time and let it be regular, and let the invitation go out to all those who are interested in healing the wounds of partyism. It need not be a unity meeting as such, but simply prayers for Christian unity. If the Episcopalians care all that much and do something about it, then surely we can too.

Let it be a quiet gathering. No speeches. No pleas for unity. No debating and no discussion. Only prayers. Voluntary prayers, punctuated by moments of quiet meditation. Let the session run for half an hour or longer, or until all who desire to do so have addressed the Father about the problem. When it is over let each one quietly leave the place of meeting and go home, with no discussion of any kind. Let this be one meeting together in which we quietly yield ourselves and the burden of our hearts to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The two brothers in Nacogdoches show what can be done when only a very few are involved. If they let it be known they might well be joined by others. But this need not be. Let us all, whether alone in our own prayers to God or in small gatherings, pray for the unity that Jesus prayed for. This is something we can all do. And if our leadership will take the initiative and set apart a time for congregational prayers for the unity of God's people, the response could well be electrifying. But it should not be just once or twice, but regular. Nor should we think in terms of numbers. If only a few respond to the "Prayers for Unity" session, we must believe that the Spirit will use those few to the glory of God and for the oneness of his people.

The brother in Nacogdoches says that his prayers for unity has brought him closer to his brothers. This is exciting, for in Eph, 4 the apostle makes it clear that the Spirit's unity is preserved only by "forbearing one another in love." To forbear is to endure folk who are difficult. This shows that unity is not that conformity that "thinks alike on every point," for then forbearance would be unnecessary. The need to forbear shows that unity is in diversity, that our love for each other transcends those differences that would otherwise separate us from each other. The professor's experience suggests that all this is made easier when one is praying for the oneness of God's people.

Perhaps it is like a marriage that is having trouble. If those involved really pour their hearts out to God that the marital bond will not . be broken, they may well discover resources of power that they never dreamed of.

It is to say that prayer to God helps make it so. In any event, Jesus prayed that we might be one. He must have believed it. We should do no less. — *the Editor*

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The Travel Letters of Alexander Campbell . . .

CAMPBELL GOES TO NEW YORK

"I have wished that the burden which I have borne were lessened," wrote Alexander Campbell in 1834 a few days after his rigorous 94-day tour to New York, "that I could retire from the contest and the incessant toils of mind and body which I have for many years endured in pleading the Bible claims upon all mankind."

On the trip to New York he had delivered 80 public addresses, conversed in private for hundreds of hours, and traveled 1700 miles amidst the trying circumstances of an infant nation, He goes on to say: "Experience, observation, faith, hope and love say, 'Slacken not the reins, be not weary in doing good, combat the good combat of faith, be valiant for the truth, earnestly contend for the faith formerly delivered to the saints."

His extended journeys would sometime render him so exhausted that he would have to refrain from public discourse for a few days, and occasionally he was forced to take to his bed in some strange city so as to nurse a cold or sore throat. On one such occasion he wrote home to his wife that he was tempted to withdraw from the conflict. using military symbolism again, but that he would await the time that the Captain of his salvation would issue an honorable discharge.

He was accompanied on the New York trip as far as Eastern Virginia by his own father, Thomas Campbell, and four other friends, who shared with him in ministering to the communities visited. After a journey through the Appalachians in the rain the party arrived in Fredericksburg on Oct. 12, eight days after leaving Bethany in the West. On the Lord's day Alexander addressed the disciples on "the character of the times," based on Mt. 11, where Jesus likens his generation to children playing in the market places, confused in their games, and calling upon his people to repent. That night he spoke on "the infallible criterion of the original gospel" to a large audience. Father Campbell and Dr. B. F. Hall, a Virginia senator and a member of the travel party, also spoke that day. Discourses lasting as long as they did, you can be sure that disciples were in assembly most of that day. One lady was immersed in the Rappahannock river that day, adding to the growing band of 36 disciples, who had already erected "a very commodious and neat brick meetinghouse," costing $2,500.00.

On to Bowling Green, Va., he addressed the disciples at Antioch on "the peerless glory of the Head of the Christian Institution," based on Col. 1 and 2, in which he contended that every defection from Christianity arose from erroneous views of the nature of the Messiah. He was the guest of a Virginia country gentleman, who, Campbell believed, would have long since "bowed to the authority of the Eternal King" were it not for "the broils and

animosities of sectarianism." Here too the disciples had built a commodious house and had already chosen elders as had Fredericksburg.

He traveled 14 miles further the next day to Newton (King and Queen), Va. where he spoke on the two Adam's, showing what man lost in the first Adam and gained in the second, drawn from Rom. 5. Here he also had meetings in homes, one lesson being drawn from Acts 3.

At Bethesda he spoke on human responsibility, based on Rom. 2, and then moved on to Richmond, where he stayed for some days, that city being the center of considerable restoration activity. Seventeen congregations met together for his meetings, and there were six or seven others in the area not represented, a total of some 1200 members with 14 public ministers of the word, one of which was Peter Ainslie.

Campbell was pleased that these churches were all *forced* to withdraw from Baptist churches, and that in no instance did the Reformers, as the majority, ever cast out the minority. He was also pleased that they were a people who wonderfully loved each other. His stay in Richmond resulted in 25 additions, 16 being immersed while nine were added from the Baptists, which adds to the evidence that our pioneers did not re-immerse Baptists.

His traveling companions having left him at Richmond, moving on south, Campbell remained in the area, addressing several congregations near the city. He reports at length concerning opposition from a Rev. Eli Ball, who was upset with his presence in the area. He warned against reading Campbell's *Harbinger,* that "pernicious and infidel publication," and urged his people not to hear the man from Bethany. There was a lot of this in Campbell's travels, which was to be expected, being the controversial man that he was. It may be that Campbell was unduly disturbed by such opposition and paid too much attention to it. He complains of how Mr. Ball conducted an opposition meeting of his own, lest his people hear the truth, and Alexander seemed pleased that he had not a single convert!

He describes the advocates of reform in Eastern Virginia as representing the better class of citizens, people of "sterling integrity and untarnished reputation," and he believed this an important reason why the movement was successful in those parts. And yet it bothered him that comparatively so few were concerned for the ancient gospel. From the home of Pascoe L. Townes in Amelia county, Virginia, Nov. 6, 1833, he wrote of how bitter opposition hindered the multitudes that would otherwise turn to his cause. But went on to say: "This is, however, the seed time, and it is cold, dry seed time; moreover, the cutworms are busy underground; but, by the patience and perseverance of the husbandmen, a good crop may yet be gathered."

His themes in these parts always emphasized “the ancient gospel,” and yet his subjects were as far reaching as truth itself. From the latter part of Lk. 24 he would deal with the proper method of reading and examining the scriptures, urging a special acquaintance with the Author of the Christian faith as the surest way of understanding the Bible. He also spoke frequently on how the gospel grants remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In a doctor’s home near Richmond he spoke on the conversion of Cornelius.

Another favorite theme was “the Christian hope and the duty of converting the world,” drawn from 1 Pet. 3, where he saw Christian wives winning their pagan husbands by their good behavior and “without any debate on the word or any controversy upon the articles of their belief.” He also observed that each believer is to be able to give reason for his hope of eternal life (verse 15).

Embarking on the steamship *Patrick Henry*, he left Richmond and moved up the James river to Jamestown, where the pilgrims first settled in 1697, an historical fact he honors in his narrative. He observes that in leaving Richmond at an early morning hour he witnessed a shower of meteors, “shooting stars,” illumined the city. Meteors rained for hours, he reports, creating a scene indescribably beautiful.

At Jamestown and Williamsburg he was impressed with the history that surrounded him, even in 1833. At Jamestown there stood the remains of the first Christian meetinghouse, and at Williamsburg the walls of the state’s first capitol stood, as well as William and Mary College, where, Campbell observes, three presidents were educated. It was in Williamsburg, “the ancient seat of the colonial nobility,” that Campbell himself touched history, speaking as he did in the old monarchical Episcopal church, the most splendid and ancient in the common-wealth. This Episcopalian hospitality impressed Campbell, and he contrasted their liberality with the closed door policy of the Baptists. On this occasion he spoke on “the word of the Lord which began at Jerusalem.”

At Yorktown, near where, he notes, Cornwallis surrendered his sword into the hands of American officers, thus ending the seven years’ war for American independence, he addressed a filled courthouse of citizens on “the resurrection of Jesus and the end for which John wrote his memoirs.” He dined in the home of a man named Wilson, who inhabited a venerable mansion erected by his great-great grandfather, the walls of which still bore the marks of Cornwallis’ bombs. The man’s grandfather had signed the Declaration of Independence.

In Norfolk, Va. he found the cause of reformation only beginning and faced with such opposition that he decided to move on to Portsmouth after but a few days. The clergy not only closed Norfolk churches to him but almost succeeded in denying him the courthouse, where he spoke over a weekend on the great apostasy (2 Thess. 2 and 2 Tim. 3) and on the great cloud of witnesses in Heb. 11. A large assembly heard him and he succeeded, he thought, in disabusing the disciples of many of the misrepresentations made against them.

Campbell was especially provoked by the clergy that would condemn him and his efforts while at the same time espousing and plagiarizing his views.

Crossing the Chesapeake bay on the *Columbus*, a 450-ton steamer, he encountered a fierce storm, which must have reminded him of the shipwreck of his youth as he attempted to sail to America, especially at midnight when the strong winds and high waves silenced the ship's motors, leaving him for the moment stranded at the heart of the 30-mile wide bay.

Arriving in Baltimore on Nov. 20, Alexander expected to be received warmly by the pastor of the First Baptist Church, a former acquaintance who had accepted many of his views and was considered to be almost as heretical as Campbell. In the meantime, however, the preacher had received the honor as Clergyman of the Year in the city of Baltimore. So, as Campbell put it, "the parson triumphed over the man," causing the disciples to use Scotti's Hall instead of the Baptist Church, where he discoursed for five nights. The first discourse was calculated to correct the misrepresentations promulgated by "the parasites of the people," meaning of course the local clergy. He went on in other addresses to describe the beginning of the Christian gospel as contrasted with the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Pagan systems.

On Lord's day he met with the disciples at the Bazaar, since they as yet had no building of their own, and he was invited by the elders to address the congregation. He spoke about the Thessalonian church, showing how they sounded out the word. He observed that holiness and happiness are greatly promoted by making others happy and holy, that to be blessed one must bless others.

In one of the Baltimore addresses he identified what he believed to be the most common error in all the religions of the world, and that is the assumption that God is to be appeased by some work on man's part, that God is reconciled to man by either physical agony, tears, blood, sacrifice, or something done or thought. And so he compared what the religious systems say, "Man by his works must reconcile God to himself," with what the Bible says, "God is by Christ reconciling the world to himself." Salvation is to be received, not purchased; to be enjoyed, not merited, by obeying the gospel.

Alexander was forever critical of the clergy, believing as he did that they were largely responsible for the conditions he sought to correct. One complaint was the pretentious meeting houses with their decorated pulpits, along with "gorgeous cushions for downy Doctors." Among the neglected items was adequate provision for immersing, even among the Baptists, for in those days there were no baptistries, however elegant the building. Campbell suggested that those who believe in immersion should cooperate in establishing a bathhouse in each major city for the convenience of those who confess Christ. It should be arranged so that the one who is immersing the candidate would not himself have to get

into the water. This is reminiscent of the fact that the Campbells, baptizing in the Buffalo at Bethany, would sometime stand on the root of a tree while immersing.

While in Baltimore Campbell attended a Jewish synagogue, having a letter of introduction to one of its prominent members. He was warmly received but found the experience dreary, for it was all heartless formality. To him it was a picture of people forsaken of God, slumber and blindness having fallen upon them.

He arrived in New York on Nov. 30 by steamboat from Baltimore, and found to his dismay that there were three small societies "holding one Lord, one faith, and one immersion" that would not sit down together around the Lord's table. So he resolved that to associate with anyone of them exclusive to the others would be sectarian. He decided he would spend a Lord's day with each of the three, and encourage them to cooperate in his effort to communicate the ancient gospel to New Yorkers at both Concert and Tammany halls. He had considerable to say to these small churches about unity, which eventually led to their unification.

Alexander enjoyed attacking skepticism and infidelity, for he not only was well armed with philosophical arguments but also invulnerable to the cavils leveled against sectarian religion by the skeptics, which his faith and practice did not obligate him to defend. The New York skeptics heard him gladly, even as he exposed their premises as untenable, and afterwards read a letter of appreciation for his visit. It read in part: "The friendly sentiments also you have expressed toward skeptics — appealing to them as men — as *honest men,* instead of treating them with contumely, as is the conduct of the Christian priesthood of New York.

To the disciples in New York he pled for the unity for which Jesus prayed, which can never be founded on opinion. Nor can unity be by the mere force of circumstances and temporary interest. It is not even by kindred feelings and experiences, for this is a unity resting on self-love. The only ground of unity, therefore, is the testimony of the apostles.

Before leaving New York he assisted in the immersion of ten persons at 7 a.m. on Lord's day in the East river, at which time he delivered a discourse on immersion.

He rested a few days in Philadelphia on his return home due to "extreme exhaustion from our much speaking in the city of New York," but remained in the city through Christmas, addressing large gatherings in the Universalist church and the Musical Fund Hall, as well as meeting with the small band of disciples of that city, to which 16 were added by baptism during his stay there. While the Yuletide fires burned in his home in Bethany, he was discoursing of faith, based on Heb. 10 and 11, in the city of brotherly love, and listening to solos in honor of Christmas by "a very celebrated ladies' preacher of the Methodist society."

At one point in his Philadelphia stay, Alexander went to a fashionable Baptist church to hear a Dr. Brantley, "our warm-hearted and faithful opponent." Since the doctor knew he was going to be present, Alexander was expecting to be admonished for all his errors. But, alas, the doctor did not show at all, even after the ministers and deacons sang and prayed three times. "By some singular and unexpected turn in the hearts of this Regular Baptist congregation, in their distress they call upon me to preach to them," he wrote. "Ascending the consecrated steps and entering the sacred desk," as he put it, he read Peter's speech in Acts 3 and urged them to repent and be converted that their sins might be blotted out and that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord might be sent to them. After the service Alexander returned to his quarters, musing upon what happened to the doctor! He next appeared in the columns of his journal, inveighing upon Campbell's heresies.

Before leaving Philadelphia Alexander spoke to an overflow audience in the Musical Fund Hall on the Christian hope for three and a half hours!

Following the Delaware as far as Baltimore, where he found still more disciples immersed since he had been with them, "we turned our face to the great and mighty West." He spoke to the saints in Hagerstown, Md. along the way where three confessed the Lord and were immersed in a creek, and then took a seat on the stage that carried him across the mountains. After a sleepless and hazardous jaunt he arrived back in Bethany.

We presume that Selina recognized him when he walked in the door, but not likely all the children. — *the Editor*

This series will continue through ten installments, and will be part of bound volume for 1970-71, which should be ordered in advance.

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The Mini-Meeting Trail . . .

WHICH OF OUR SECTS WOULD CAMPBELL JOIN?

We had a special Sunday afternoon service in Murfreesboro, Tennessee recently. I addressed the First Christian Church that morning and had a large home gathering that evening. At an early hour that a.m. I had gone to Nashville with Norman and Ella Rae Parks to participate in the services of the *avant garde* Belmont congregation, an inner-city group that is as catholic as it is holy and apostolic and that fills its building several times on Lord's day. It has the kind of service where the leather jacket set, the long-haired hippies, the exuberant college crowd, the crew cut business man, and tolerant orthodox main-liners all get turned on for Jesus. And this includes blacks and other minorities. As I

sat there before services began, taking it all in, a mini-skirted college gal, chic and blond, strolled by with a Negro child on each hand.

But the Belmont Church of Christ, where the inimitable Don Finto labors, is a story all its own, and I am not attempting to tell the story here. It is enough to say that Nashville's "hippie church" is one of the most exciting places in the brotherhood, however unsettling it is in orthodox circles. And it is a proven haven of rest to many burdened souls. I would not call it hippie at all, but rather a free church where one can be himself in the Lord and not be required to toe some party line. One lad from the down under set, who had been taken in for Jesus' sake by a Belmonter, got up at a recent service to bear witness to what Jesus meant to him. He thanked the folk at Belmont with, "I'll tell for sure, this church has done a hell of a lot for me!"

Enough said. And in Nashville, of all places!

The afternoon service in Murfreesboro was especially meaningful to me for two reasons: we had a good solid representation of our Restoration folk from far right to far left, and in the audience were two couples that I was especially pleased to see, Louis and Bess Cochran, and Mr. and Mrs. Boone, parents of Pat Boone. The Boone's, who are delightful people and deeply spiritual believers, spent the rest of the day with us, sharing with us in detail the recent experiences of their famous son and his family as it appeared from their perspective. They were at first very concerned about Pat and Shirley, fearing that they had fallen prey to some fanciful California sect, for they heard lots of rumors before they were ever able to talk to Pat. But once they talked to their son and saw firsthand the glorious change that had come in his life, including a solution to some grievous problems that had long disturbed them all, they not only rejoiced but resolved that they too would study the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

This they did for well over a year, studying and praying *together* for the first time. Finally they too, both of them, had experiences similar to, but perhaps more dramatic, than Pat's and Shirley's, the details of which I will not divulge here in deference to their privacy. But it is now generally known in their home congregation, the College Church of Christ, which is hard to the campus of David Lipscomb College, that they are not exactly kosher on the Holy Spirit. But they are completely accepted by the brethren nonetheless and there has been no effort, even after sessions with the elders, to disparage their position. And I say three cheers for the College congregation for this openness. It is a sign of real spiritual growth when a congregation can keep on loving those who cannot manage to stay within the party mould.

I must admit that brother Boone's story was convincing. A working man who is not given to much talk, and one deliberative enough to make decisions slowly, he studied the mission of the Spirit of Christ in *his* life for the first time — and for over a year

Then as he was praying early one a.m. before going to work, talking to the Lord as usual in his "down home" way, it happened. Well, it may be that I just haven't spent enough time in Searcy, Arkansas, but I just can't tell such a brother that it is only a case of indigestion or that Satan has him hooked. Especially when he sits there, so obviously good and honest hearted, and tells me he now has a joy he never before realized was possible.

Enough said. And in Nashville, of all places!

Louis and Bess Cochran are folk that I have a deep appreciation for due to their love for Restoration history and for being people of letters generally. I have the honor of being among the few who possess all of Louis's novels, including *Son of Haman*, *Row's End*, and *Flood Tides*, long since out of print. And these I have only because he was gracious enough to give them to me. But he and Bess are more widely known among us for their *Captives of the Word*, *Raccoon John Smith*, and *Fool of God*. Bess being a writer in her own right. I am not sure that Bess is the best man of the two (It is a draw!), but I notice that she can hold her own with her ingenious, ex-FBI husband.

A case in point was at that afternoon Murfreesboro meeting, at which time I reviewed the history of our movement, pointing to some of the fallacies of interpretation we have fallen into, such as equating the Restoration Movement with the church itself. So I had somewhat to say about Alexander Campbell, observing that he had no intention of restoring the church, which he acknowledged to have always existed, but to restore certain things *to* the church. I also pointed out that Campbell wanted to work *within* the established churches, that it was never his intention to separate from the Baptists (he vowed he would *not* leave them), and he certainly had no idea of starting another sect.

This brought Louie to his feet, not especially to approve of what was said, but to observe that if Campbell were alive today he would not join the Disciples of Christ (Louie's affiliation), but that he would identify with the Church of Christ, "you folks," he would indicate, pointing at me. I could have asked him *which* Church of Christ, but there was no reason to discourage a man who was being so gracious. He went on to explain that Campbell objected to instrumental music, comparing it to a cowbell in a symphony orchestra, and for that reason he would cast his lot with us.

Louie no more than got seated until Bess stood and said, "I'm his wife and I disagree with him!" She went on to say that she didn't believe that Campbell would join *any* of our groups for the simple reason that he was not a sectarian. He would move among us all and all others, she insisted, but he would not favor any group to the exclusion of the others. She indicated that Campbell would be ashamed of our ugly divisions and would do his best to unite our forces and make God's people one, just as he did before.

Those who are reading our series on Campbell's travel letters will observe that the installment in this issue on his sojourn in New York supports Bess more than Louie. Campbell, upon arriving in New York in the early years of the Movement, found three

congregations so divided that they could not break bread together. And so he would not associate himself with anyone of them to the exclusion of the others. Spending his time equally with all three, and through mass meetings that included them all, he worked for their unification, which was eventually effected.

It is noteworthy that he did not align himself with the church that most conformed to his own views. This is not the purpose of an assembly of believers, to congregate folk in some arbitrary conformity, but to cultivate oneness amidst diversity. People can be and will be different, somewhat different, and still be one in Jesus together. Campbell knew this, and so he would never be pleased with our plea for conformity rather than unity.

It doesn't matter, of course, what Alexander Campbell would think of us (or, *does* think of us) should he again walk among men. It is only another way of looking at our condition. What really matters is what the Lord thinks of us, and I can't believe he is pleased with out willingness to continue in our divisive ways.

It is indeed a sobering thought to realize that such a one as Alexander Campbell would not get along with any of us very well, even if he chose to. Some would reject him because he believed there are Christians in the sects, or because he equivocated on the absolute essentiality of immersion, or because he "fellowshipped" sectarians, or because he supported the missionary society.

There is hardly a pioneer preacher of those days that we would accept, mainly because they were not sectarians. So long as we assume that one must have fellowship only with our own crowd, drawing the line on all other of God's people, just that long we will perpetuate our parties. And all this is so contrary to what the pioneers were attempting to do.

For this to be true of Campbell and the pioneers is bad enough. What would be the case if Jesus himself again walked in our midst?

I asked a Harvard professor that question one time. Without hesitation his reply was that Jesus would be imprisoned or again killed. I asked him who would do it. "The church," he said, "or the clergy would do it."

How would he be treated at the Fifth and Izzard Church of Christ should he ride up some Sunday morning on an ass? Or how would he be accepted sitting among us in a business suit, attempting to teach us as he did before, and our not knowing his identity?

I am persuaded that many would accept him just as many accepted him before. Indeed they are the ones that accept him even now, believing in him whom they have not yet seen. Such ones are not part of the problem of sectariansim in the body of Christ. — *the Editor*

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UNITY MEET IN CALIFORNIA

It would be great getting to see some of our readers at the Seventh Annual Unity Forum in Cupertino, Ca., July 5-8. Conducted by the Blaney Ave. Church of Christ, it is expected to attract wide interest in the San Francisco area. The address is 10601 N. Blaney Ave., Cupertino, Ca. 94014. The congregation hopes to provide free housing for those who come from a distance. You should address your request to Jim Reynolds. Stan Harbour, formerly of the Bay area but now living in San Angelo, Texas, is the chairman of this forum.

An exciting program with substantial speakers are scheduled. Of special interest will be the appearance of Pat Boone on Thursday, July 6, along with an interview with his wife Shirley. Pat is so busy this summer that this is still tentative, but he hopes to make it. Equally important is the participation of Dr. Jack Finegan, a Disciple, of Pacific School of Religion, and Dr. Everett Ferguson, of ACC, who will deal with foundations for unity, which is the theme of the forum. Also appearing will be Charles Shelton, Charles Holt, Warren Bell, Ervin Waters, Jim Reynolds, Lloyd Moyer, Kenon Osborne (Roman Catholic priest), and it should all be a tremendous experience for those who love Jesus and the oneness of his body.

Jim Reynolds will be pleased to send you a detailed program.

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